

Serial No. 09/705,036
Reply to Office Action of January 6, 2004

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-18 (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) A method for automatically tracking an item such as a vehicle within a storage area that is received by the storage area, stored in the storage area and shipped out of the storage area, said method comprising the steps of:

assigning a first item identifier indicative of an ~~identify~~ identity of the item, a destination identifier indicative of a predetermined destination for the item, a status identifier indicative of a status of the item, a transport means identifier indicative of how the item will be shipped, and a storage location identifier indicative of a storage location of the item within a storage area containing a plurality of stored items;

storing the first item identifier, destination identifier, status identifier, and location identifier in a first selectively programmable identification device having a memory that is operatively in communication with a second selectively programmable interrogation device having a memory that is also operatively in communication with a computer system;

assigning a second item identifier to the item that associates the item with the first item identifier, wherein the second item identifier is stored in the memory of the first selectively programmable identification device;

affixing the first selectively programmable identification device to the item; and

using the second selectively programmable interrogation device to ~~interrogate the identify~~ a predetermined item among the plurality of stored items by interrogating each of the stored item's first selectively programmable identification device by and comparing the first item

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identifier with the second item identifier until the predetermined item is identified, and to read the destination identifier, status identifier and storage identifier if the first item identifier compares to the second item identifier, in order to track the location of the identified item within the storage area.

20. (Currently Amended) A method as set forth in claim 19, further including the step of programming the selectively programmable identification device with the first item identifier, destination identifier, status identifier, transport means identifier, and the storage location identifier when the item is received.

21. (Previously Presented) A method as set forth in claim 19 further including the step of modifying the storage location identifier if the item is moved to another storage location within the storage area.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Previously Presented) A method as set forth in claim 19 further including the step of removing the first selectively programmable identification device before the item is shipped from the storage area.

24. (Previously Presented) A method as set forth in claim 19 wherein the first selectively programmable identification device includes a processor, a memory and a transceiver

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and the second selectively programmable identification device includes a processor, a memory and a transceiver.

25. (Previously Presented) A method as set forth in claim 19 further including the step of the first programmable identification device selectively transmitting a geographic coordinate corresponding to storage location of the item.

26. (Currently Amended) A method as set forth in claim 19 wherein said first selectively programmable identification device is a bar code storage device for selectively reading and storing the first item identifier, second item identifier, destination identifier, status identifier, transport means identifier and the storage location identifier.

27. (Currently Amended) A method as set forth in claim 19 further including the ~~steps~~ step of ~~identifying a predetermined transportation means and~~ assigning the item to the identified transportation means using the transport means identifier.

28. (Previously Presented) A method as set forth in claim 19 further including the step of selectively altering the status identifier to prevent or allow shipment of the item.

29. (Canceled)

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30. (Currently Amended) A method as set forth in claim 19 wherein the status ~~code~~ identifier contains the shipping availability of the freight item and the freight item is selected only if the stored status ~~code~~ identifier indicates shipping availability.

31. (Currently Amended) A method as set forth in claim 19 wherein the freight item is a vehicle.

32. (Currently Amended) A method as set forth in claim 19 further comprising the step of generating a report including the location of the freight item.

33. (Currently Amended) A method as set forth in claim 19 wherein a rail car is used as a freight transport ~~carrier~~ means.

Claims 34-43 (Canceled)

44. (Currently Amended) A method for automatically tracking a vehicle within a storage area that is received by the storage area, stored in the storage area and shipped out of the storage area, said method comprising the steps of:

automatically assigning a first vehicle identifier indicative of an ~~identify~~ identity of the vehicle, a destination identifier indicative of a predetermined destination for the vehicle, a status identifier indicative of a status of the vehicle, and a storage location identifier indicative of a storage location of the vehicle within a storage area containing a plurality of stored vehicles;

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storing the first vehicle identifier, destination identifier, status identifier, and location identifier in a first selectively programmable identification device having a processor, a memory and a transceiver that is operatively in communication with a second selectively programmable interrogation device having a processor, a memory and a transceiver that is also operatively in communication with a computer system;

assigning a second vehicle identifier to the vehicle that associates the vehicle with the first vehicle identifier, wherein the second vehicle identifier is stored in the memory of the first selectively programmable identification device;

affixing the first selectively programmable identification device to the vehicle when the vehicle is received;

modifying the storage location identifier if the vehicle is moved to another storage location within the storage area;

using the second selectively programmable interrogation device to ~~interrogate the~~ locate a predetermined vehicle among the stored vehicles by interrogating each of the stored vehicle's first selectively programmable identification device by and comparing the first vehicle identifier with the second vehicle identifier to locate the predetermined vehicle, and to read the destination identifier, status identifier and storage identifier if the first vehicle identifier compares to the second vehicle identifier, in order to track the location of the located vehicle within the storage area; and

removing the first selectively programmable identification device before the located vehicle is shipped from the storage area.

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45. (Currently Amended) A method as set forth in claim 44 further including the step of assigning a ~~transportation-status~~ transport means identifier to the item indicative of ~~whether~~ how the item ~~has been~~ will be shipped, wherein the ~~transportation-status~~ transport means identifier is stored in the memory of the first selectively programmable identification device.

46. (Currently Amended) A method as set forth in claim 44 further including the first step of the first programmable identification device selectively transmitting a geographic coordinate corresponding to storage location of the item.

47. (Currently Amended) A method as set forth in claim 44 wherein said first selectively programmable identification device is a bar code storage device for selectively reading and storing the first item identifier, second item identifier, destination identifier, status identifier and the storage location identifier.

48. (Currently Amended) A method as set forth in claim ~~[[44]]~~ 45 further including the ~~steps~~ step of ~~identifying a predetermined transportation means and~~ assigning the item to the identified transportation means using the transport means identifier.

49. (Previously Presented) A method as set forth in claim 44 further including the step of selectively altering the status identifier to prevent or allow shipment of the item.

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50. (Currently Amended) A method as set forth in claim 44 wherein the status code identifier contains the shipping availability of the vehicle and the vehicle is selected only if the stored status code identifier indicates shipping availability.

51. (Previously Presented) A method as set forth in claim 44 further comprising the step of generating a report including the location of the vehicle within the storage area and the status of the vehicle.

52. (Currently Amended)) A method as set forth in claim 44 wherein a rail car is used as a freight transport carrier means.